

Robert A. Carpenter  
Chairman of the Ashley  
County Library Board

We have gathered here for the purpose of honoring and commemorating the life and service of Ann Etheridge Veazey who, for more than 35 years exemplified an untiring, unselfish, unwavering dedication to the proposition that all men, women and children should have and uphold the inalienable right to a wide range of information, education and entertainment through the written world of books... hardbound, paperback, periodicals... fiction, non-fiction, reference... juvenile and adult, ---they were dear to Ann, but not nearly so dear as the people who frequented the services of the Ashley County Library.

The Ashley County Library was founded in June, 1935, as a project of the American Legion Auxillary, Poy Gardner Post # 75, and funded by their initial \$45.75 contribution. One month later, in July 1935, there were 167 books in the library, of that number 153 had been donated.

That beginning library was in a 12'X14' room of a frame building located about where the north-south wing of the present library is positioned.

Our Ashley County Library was housed, for a time, in a small portion of the Bankston Building at 201 S. Mulberry before moving into two small rooms high upstairs in the old court house.

It was during the library's court-house stay <sup>1945</sup> that Ann became the librarian, and that is when I came to know her.

There was a summer play ground project on the property where the Portis Elementary School now stands and there were dozens of youngsters daily. Each morning, about 10, someone would shout "here she comes, here comes Miss Ann..." and before she could get across the street we would all be gathered around her spot anxiously waiting for her reading from another story-time book or two.

Because of her efforts and friendly ways I'm sure a great number of us were no longer afraid to climb all of those stairs at the court house. We were no longer intimidated by the closely placed rows of shelves loaded with books making a veritable canyon reaching twice or three times over our heads.

---We had a friend at the library. We all knew and loved Miss Ann.

Miss Ann's untiring efforts led to the first permanent... real library.

A one-half mill library tax was approved by voters in 1948 and was increased to a full mill in 1954.



The Ashley County Library moved into this, it's first real home, in 1955 and quickly outgrew itself, resulting in the addition of the west wing in 1961.

From ~~167~~<sup>167</sup> books in 1935, the Ashley County Library has grown to more than 30,000 volumes ---and subscribes to far more than 100 periodicals. Something in the neighborhood of 14,000 books are checked out each quarter, and the Library ~~is~~ again beginning to run out of space, it is bursting at the seams.....

all because we found that ~~we~~ had -and have- a friend at the Library.

Ann Etheridge Verzey was our friend at the Library for more than 35 years...

It is with great pleasure -and pride- that we now commemorate the dedication of Ann Etheridge Verzey through the placement of this plaque to her memory on this, the eighth day of November, 1984, that we might be constantly reminded of -

— Our Friend at the Library. —